3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

Sd out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (").[1] This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market.

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life.

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [16]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans.

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners.